# THOUGHTS

ON THE

# NECESSITY AND MEANS

OF

# EDUCATING

# THE POOR OF IRELAND,

AND

# ATTACHING THEM TO THEIR COUNTRY.

By JOHN DONOVAN, Esq.

BARRISTER AT LAW.

Dublin:

Printed for R. E. MERCIER and Co.

31, Anglesea-street.

1795.

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# THOUGHTS, &c.

AT a period the moſt awful that has occurred in the hiſtory of this country, or perhaps of the world, at a time when every Government in Europe has been ſhaken to its foundation, and the Britiſh Empire itſelf, which has ſo often fought for glory and for an imaginary balance of power, is now reduced to fight for its very exiſtence; it becomes the duty of every Iriſhman who ſees the dreadful precipice on which his country ſtands,

to warn his fellow citizens of their danger; and if any man thinks he has diſcovered, or can adviſe any means for ſaving the country, it would be criminal to remain ſilent. Had the great talents of the members of the preſent Adminiſtration produced any plan likely to give *permanent* ſecurity to this country and effectually to improve the ſituation of the people, it might be conſidered preſumption in an obſcure individual to ſet up his judgment in oppoſition to theirs; but ſince they have not even promiſed any thing of conſiderable moment, except the further emancipation of the Catholics, and the taking off the hearth tax, (meaſures, which although in themſelves extremely proper, can by no means be conſidered ſufficient to extricate the country from the deſperate ſituation in which ſhe is at preſent) any man who thinks he can point out the dangers of the country and how they may be avoided, has not only a right,

but

but it is his duty to deliver his ſentiments to the Nation.

As to the dangers which threaten this country, before I ſtate my opinion I ſhall firſt take notice of the opinion delivered by Mr. Grattan at the commencement of this ſeſſion; his opinion is at all times worthy of the moſt ſerious attention, but particularly ſo at preſent, when he is conſidered as Prime Miniſter of Ireland: "If" ſays he, "France ſhould be poſ-"ſeſſed of all the coaſt, and the harbours "from Breſt to the Zuyder Zee, this iſland "muſt ſink to the bottom of the ocean," but ſhe is now poſſeſſed of them, and in all human probability will retain the poſſeſſion; again he ſays, "It is on the Con-"tinent alone that the Britiſh Empire is "to be ſaved;" "it is impoſſible to ſe-"parate the Weſtern Empire, the Con-"tinent cannot belong to France, and "Ireland to herſelf." Now thoſe ex-

 preſſions,

preſſions, as well as the whole tenor of his ſpeech, plainly ſhew, that it is his opinion, that unleſs the Allies ſhould, contrary to all probability, ſucceed againſt the French on the Continent, theſe iſlands, Ireland at leaſt, muſt ſooner or later be ſwallowed up, and form part of what he has termed the Weſtern Empire. As I differ entirely from this opinion, and am perſuaded that, notwithſtanding the acquiſition of Holland, and the ſucceſs of the French on the Continent, this country may ſtill be ſaved, if Miniſters will but act wiſely and honeſtly towards the people; I ſhall ſtate my opinion of our ſituation and point out ſuch remedies as I think, if it is the will of heaven, would ſtill preſerve Ireland among the nations of the earth, and make her more reſpectable than ever ſhe has been; even though France ſhould add the Spaniſh as well as Dutch navy to her own; even though ſhe ſhould make ſuch gigantic exertions

exertions as to give her the abſolute command of the ocean.

The danger which threatens our exiſtence as a nation, is this; that unleſs the French Republic is deſtroyed (of which there is not the ſlighteſt proſpect) it is more than probable, it is almoſt certain, that ſooner or later, France will be ſuperior to Britain at ſea; and in that caſe, the generality of politicians give up this country as abſolutely loſt. Now the only reaſon for deſpairing in ſuch circumſtances, is, that we are conſcious, that the *affections of the great maſs of the people, the lower orders, are not with the Government of the country*, and that Government could not, in the hour of danger, look to them for ſupport, but would rather fear them as enemies; that this is the caſe, is moſt notorious; it would be folly to pretend to diſguiſe it; but I think the cauſe of this

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moſt alarming ſymptom may be diſcovered, and proper remedies applied.

The cauſes of this want of attachment to the country and its Government, I conceive to be, 1ſt, the barefaced corruption and profligacy of many ſucceſſive adminiſtrations; 2dly, the extreme miſery and ignorance of the lower orders of the people.

Miſery would of itſelf make the poor diſaffected, and anxious for any change; but ignorance encreaſes this evil conſiderably, for the ignorant, incapable of calculating the calamities which attend a violent Revolution, ſuppoſe that every poor man would immediately get riches, without labour; the ignorant alſo are the eaſier miſled, and when miſled, the moſt ferocious and cruel, as we ſee in every inſurrection of ſlaves; and as I am ſorry to add, we have ſeen in our own country.

country. That the lower orders of the people of Ireland are extremely ignorant, is evident by comparing them with thoſe of a ſimilar deſcription in England, Scotland, France, Holland, Switzerland, and America—indeed it hardly requires ſuch a compariſon to prove it, when we conſider that ſcarce one peaſant in twenty knows ſo much as the letters of our alphabet. That the lower orders of our countrymen are extremely miſerable would alſo appear from comparing their ſituation with that of the lower orders in almoſt every other country, and alſo from our own obſervation. But as this is loudly denied by the whole hoſt of the uncharitable and unfeeling, by all that deſcription of men who can argue, that the Weſt Indian negroes are as well off as any European peaſantry, and that God and nature never intended the great maſs of human creatures to enjoy more comfort and happineſs than they experience; therefore

therefore to ſtop their mouths, ſome further arguments muſt be adduced to prove, that which every man who has eyes to ſee and a heart to feel, requires no further proof of.

Firſt, to begin with the ſtate of the metropolis.

When our celebrated preacher, Mr. Kirwan, lately addreſſed the public by an advertiſement for the poor of his pariſh *only*, he begins with thoſe remarkable words " ſhall 20,000 of your fellow-" creatures periſh for want of the com-" mon neceſſaries of life," and he calls " upon the children of proſperity to con-" ſider with attention the *ill-fated* popu-" lation of this country." If 20,000 were periſhing for want in *one pariſh*— what muſt have been the ſtate of the metropolis! The other day when men of the firſt rank and conſequence undertook a charity to relieve the diſtreſſes of the

poor,

poor, their advertiſement begins "Miſeries on Miſeries," and they draw a moſt frightful picture of the ſtate of the poor.

If after thoſe teſtimonies, ſupported by that of every charitable individual or aſſociation that examines the ſituation of the poor—and if, in ſpite of the evidence of his own ſenſes, any man will ſtill inſiſt that the lower orders of the people in Dublin are as happy and as comfortable as they can or ought to be, I will not ſay that man is deceived, but I will ſay his heart is bad: If ſuch is the ſtate of the poor in the metropolis—it muſt be ſuppoſed that they are at leaſt equally miſerable in the other cities and great towns of the kingdom, where the ſame cauſes prevail, and where there are not an equal number of rich to relieve their diſtreſſes. If it is ſuppoſed that this diſtreſs is merely temporary, and occaſioned by the war, this ſuppoſition makes nothing againſt

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the argument; for if the time of war and danger muſt in the nature of things be the time of miſery to the poor, and conſequently of diſcontent; we will find that at the very time we want their attachment and ſupport we muſt not expect either. As to the condition of the poor in the country, I believe it is generally allowed, that there is no peaſantry in Europe (where the peaſants are not abſolute ſlaves) worſe houſed and worſe fed, than the peaſantry of Ireland. (Some few diſtricts of Ireland are, to be ſure, an exception to this general obſervation.)

Did Government ever beſtow its care to improve the ſituation of the poor? Is there any national proviſion for the old man who is paſt his labour? For the ſick who cannot labour, and who requires aſſiſtance even to live? Are the diſtreſſes of the poor at all noticed by the Government? Are the children they give to

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the nation educated? Does the induſtry of every individual meet encouragement, or inſure a livelihood? Is there one ſingle point, wherein that attention is paid by Government to the ſituation of the poor, as to make them think the Government is their friend, and feel a perſonal intereſt in preſerving it?.

If to all thoſe queſtions every man muſt anſwer no, it is no wonder that the poor are diſcontented. We have no right to expect their aſſiſtance in defending a ſtate, in which they do not feel any Intereſt. "The world is not their friend "nor the world's law." It is natural that they ſhould look forward to Revolutions; and the moſt likely way to change their ſentiments would be to improve their ſituations. If the cauſe of our deſpair and of our danger is that the lower orders are not attached to the Government of the country—is not the remedy obvious?

vious? Remove the cauſe, and the danger vaniſhes. But how is the attachment of the lower orders to be gained, and how are their affections to be won? the anſwer to this is very eaſy—Government ſhould cultivate their attachment by deſerving it, by conferring real benefits on them, by labouring for their good, and by convincing them that it was the wiſh of Government as much as poſſible to improve their ſituations and make them happy.

I know that every plan which is propoſed for the improvement of the ſituation of the poor will be conſidered Utopian and viſionary, eſpecially by thoſe who both in and out of Parliament maintain that corruption is the only way of governing Ireland; and it is probable whoever ſhall propoſe ſuch a plan will be ſet down by them as a diſaffected perſon and a jacobin; but this is no time

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to conceal the truth; had the country been wiſely governed hitherto we would have now no cauſe to fear; but ſince it has been ſo governed, as to leave the lower orders miſerable, and make them diſaffected, and that in conſequence of ſuch miſrule, the country is in the extremeſt danger—the diſeaſe that has ſo long preyed upon its vitals, and now threatens its exiſtence, ſhould no longer be concealed, but it ſhould be expoſed and attacked with boldneſs and reſolution, as well as ſkill.

We hear a great deal, eſpecially in Faſt Day Sermons, of the wickedneſs of the people bringing down curſes on the nation. I admit it is ſometimes ſo, although I think it is generally the wickedneſs of thoſe in power which cauſes the miſery of nations. "Quicquid delirant reges "plectuntur Achivi;" but I ſhall tell our rulers and governors, not in my own words,

words, but in the words of the prophet Ezekiel, or of God himſelf, what kind of conduct in thoſe in power, brings down divine indignation and wrath upon their heads; and I would ſeriouſly recommend it to them to conſider attentively the paſſage.

" Son of man, propheſy againſt the " ſhepherds of Iſrael, propheſy and ſay " unto them—thus ſaith the Lord God " unto the ſhepherds; woe be to the ſhep- " herds of Iſrael that do feed themſelves! " Should not the ſhepherds feed the " flocks?

" Ye eat the fat, and you clothe you " with the wool; ye kill them that are " fed: but ye feed not the flock.

" The diſeaſed have ye not ſtrength- " ened; neither have ye healed that " which was ſick; neither have you " bound up that which was broken, nei-

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" ther have ye brought again that which
" was driven away; neither have ye
" ſought that which was loſt: but with
" force and cruelty have ye ruled them.

" And they were ſcattered, becauſe
" there is no ſhepherd; and they became
" meat to all the beaſts of the field
" when they were ſcattered.

" Therefore, O, ye ſhepherds, hear
" the word of the Lord.

" Thus ſaith the Lord God; Behold
" I am againſt the ſhepherds; and I will
" require my flock at their hand, and
" cauſe them to ceaſe from feeding the
" flock; neither ſhall the ſhepherds feed
" themſelves any more; for I will de-
" liver my flock from their mouth,
" that they may not be meat for them."
*Ezekiel*, chap. 34.

Having

Having produced this authority, which will be allowed to be no Utopian dream, but divine truth, I think I may ſafely aſſert that the very reverſe of the conduct here reprobated is the line which a good Government ought to purſue, in order to obtain the favour of God or Man. In the ſame ſpirit, but in other words, it may be expreſt, that it is the duty as well as the intereſt of the Government not to ſuffer the children of the poor to run wild and be loſt for want of education, not to ſuffer talents given by God for the ſervice and the ornament of the nation, to lie hidden (like diamonds in the mine) for want of notice, or be cramped for want of encouragement—they ſhould take care that juſtice and not cruelty and oppreſſion is done between the creditor and debtor; they ſhould aſſiſt induſtry and reward virtue; againſt the preſſure of old age and ſickneſs they ſhould adminiſter comfort and ſupport;

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in ſhort, the paternal care and attention of a good Government ſhould, like the bleſſings of Heaven, enter in at the door of every poor man in the nation, and viſit his miſerable cottage, his family and his ſituation; it ſhould educate his children; redreſs his wrongs; aſſiſt his induſtry; and relieve his wants; or in the ſimple but ſublime language of the prophet, the ſhepherds ſhould feed the flock, they ſhould ſtrengthen that which is diſeaſed—heal that which is ſick, bind up that which is broken—bring back that which has been driven away, ſeek after that which was loſt.

If ever we ſhall have a Government that will act on thoſe principles, that Government will find in the gratitude and attachment of the lower orders, in the affections and love of the whole people, and in the eſteem and praiſe of every honeſt and good man, a more

ſolid ſatisfaction, and a more powerful ſupport than they could derive from all the venal Ayes or Noes which are to be bought or ſold in Parliament. It would be impoſſible that the people ſhould not be attached to ſuch a Government as here deſcribed, for every man is by nature attached to his own intereſt, and in this caſe, it would be evidently the intereſt of all, of the poor particularly, to preſerve a Government which, next to heaven, was their beſt friend. All orders would riſe, in the hour of danger, as ſpontaneouſly to preſerve ſuch a ſyſtem, as the hand does to preſerve the head.

If this can be doubted, or that the attachment of the people is what may truly be termed "the cheap defence of nations," the only impregnable ramparts for a ſtate, the hiſtory of every nation which has exiſted, or which now appears

pears on the great theatre of the world, will prove the fact to an abſolute certainty. What is the preſent ſituation of all thoſe countries in Europe which have been governed on different principles? they wanted not armies or fleets, they wanted not treaſure, nor artificial reſources; but they wanted, what would have been of more importance to them than all theſe, they wanted the attachment of the people; had they poſſeſſed that, Flanders would not have been loſt; Holland would not have been loſt; Spain and Italy would now be ſafe, the German Empire would be ſafe; Ireland would be ſafe. Having ſaid ſo much of the abſolute neceſſity of cultivating the attachment of the people, if we wiſh to continue a nation, and are not content to be ſwallowed up in the great Weſtern Empire mentioned by Mr. Grattan, I ſhall now proceed to the means by which it is to be cultivated; and of all the im-

portant ſervices that the people have a right to expect from Government: I ſhall begin with education, being the firſt in order, and alſo in value.

## *On the Education of the Poor.*

The earth, beautiful as it is, when ſmiling with cultivation, in whatever region it appears rude from the hand of Nature, preſents nothing to the view but peſtilential ſwamps, and a horrid wilderneſs: the ſoil of the human mind too, muſt be broken and cultivated, or it is in vain we expect to find in it the fruits of virtue or of happineſs; theſe are not the wild ſpontaneous fruits of the ſoil; but the delicious produce of human induſtry and culture. This, then, is the cauſe of the diverſity of national character and diſpoſition; that in ſome countries the human mind is cultivated in one manner,

ner, in others, ſomewhat differently; in ſome it is more cultivated, in others leſs; but in Ireland it is not cultivated at all.

When I ſpeak of the people, I always mean the great maſs of the population of the country, the lower orders; and on them, I think, the God of all the earth might look down with ſupreme compaſſion, and ſay of Ireland, as was ſpoken of Iſrael; "my people are deſtroyed for lack of knowledge."† In order to prove this, I ſhall only put it to the feelings and the judgment of every man who is a father, and has himſelf received an education; if he could ſuppoſe his ſon to grow up neglected like the beaſts of the field, or like the children of the peaſantry of Ireland, without the advantage of any education, moral inſtruction, or example, what ſort of a man would

† Hoſea, chap. 4th.

he

he expect him to turn out? Is it not probable, is it not almoſt certain, that he muſt be deſtitute of every honeſt principle—a diſgrace and ſorrow to his parents, and a burthen to himſelf? But if this is not granted—I think it may be poſitively proved that common honeſty, ſo indiſpenſably neceſſary to the happineſs of ſociety, is never the ſpontaneous growth of the human mind, but that it is always an acquired virtue.

To prove this, I will put another queſtion—Did any man or woman in the nation ever know or ſee a child, that from its own nature reſpected the property of others, and would not take another child's plaything, before it had been often checked, and taught that it was wrong to do ſo? Now if we follow the uneducated child up to manhood, we will univerſally ſee, the ſame diſpoſitions are retained—the character of every ignorant

norant and ſavage people is the ſame—diſhoneſty, low cunning, deceit and cruelty. If it is argued that the corruption of human nature is not to be remedied by education, ſuch argument is ridiculouſly falſe and contrary to all experience. When God looked down upon his creation, and all the works of his hands, he ſaw that all was good: but nevertheleſs he aſſigned it to man as an employment to weed the garden of life, to cultivate the fruits of the earth and the virtues of his own mind. If this is neglected, miſery and vice are the certain conſequences.

If ever there was a time, in which the education of the poor, might, without the utmoſt danger, as well as diſgrace, be neglected by the Government, that time is now no more.

France beſtows the utmoſt attention to her riſing generation, and it muſt follow

low as certainly as any effect from its cauſe, that if their republic ſhould ſtand on its preſent principles, the French will be in future, even more than they are at preſent, a *nation of ſoldiers*; what force then could Ireland oppoſe to ſuch a nation, in a future conteſt, if our peaſantry are to continue as they now are, uneducated, miſerable, and without attachment to their country. But if any one ſhall ſay—that Government can do very well without the people being happy, that they do not want their attachment, that they are this year ſuperior at ſea, and that they rely upon Providence that this ſuperiority will always continue; I anſwer, the firſt aſſertion has no foundation; and the term *reliance upon Providence* is profaned, when it is ſo applied. Does any man who exhauſts his ground by bad farming, rely upon Providence, that in future years he will have as great crops, as if he had farmed it well?

Does

Does the country gentleman, who never planted, nor cultivated trees, rely upon Providence, that his future woods will provide for his children and grand children ?

No; but many of them do plant for the benefit of future ages; the moſt ſtupid farmer conſiders not only what he will do with his ground this year, but what he will do the next year and the year after: while our modern European Legiſlators ſeem never to conſider beyond the preſent year; and the reaſon is obvious; they conſider they hold their great places and appointments on a very precarious tenure; it is therefore their principal object, to cram their pockets and provide for their relations as faſt as they can; and as for the nation it may take its chance. With their reſpective nations they have nothing to do, but to faſten on them like hungry leeches, and drink their blood until they are gorged

gorged with it; when they are full, off they drop, and another ſet as hungry takes their place; theſe, in their turn, are ſucceeded by another, and another; how then is it poſſible that nations ſo governed ſhould enjoy health or happineſs?

If the general principle is admitted, that the poor ought to receive education, I think the beſt talents in the nation ſhould be ſet at work, to draw up the moſt perfect plan, and the moſt proper for the particular ſituation of Ireland—but, in the mean time, as every man who complains of any thing that is wrong, is ſure to be aſked for his remedy; I ſhall take the liberty of ſubmitting to the conſideration of the public what I conceive to be the great objects of educating the poor, and alſo ſuch means as appear to me to be the moſt likely to carry thoſe much deſired objects into effect. The advantages which I would

would expect from educating the poor, are, 1ſt, that their minds would be by this means opened and prepared to receive inſtruction, whenever it ſhould be laid before them in a proper ſhape; and then, a good Government would always take care, to ſupply them with ſuch information as would be neceſſary and proper for them. 2dly, Every genius and talent that Ireland contains among her millions now doomed to ignorance, would be diſcovered—and might be cultivated and directed to the advantage of the nation and of its poſſeſſor. It is indeed a melancholy conſideration, to think how many of the brighteſt geniuſes, who might in every branch of human knowledge, have been the lights and ornaments of our country, have had their great talents buried in obſcurity, (like our precious metals in our mines) becauſe there has been no one to notice them; becauſe in this country no attention is paid to

thoſe things. How many Newtons and Locke may have been loſt to the world, becauſe they had the misfortune to be born in a country, where the children of the poor are not even taught *to read*. Should the wintry blaſt of poverty howl at their birth, here they will find no genial ſpring to viſit their young minds, and call forth into life, the latent ſeeds of genius and of virtue. Thoſe heavenly ſeeds are ſcattered with impartial hand over all the regions of the earth; but ſome legiſlators prepare the ſoil to receive them, while others let them "lye on "the way ſide, for the fowls of the air "to devour" and the winds of heaven to diſperſe.

There is another kind of talents which deſerve to be particularly mentioned— How many Wedgewoods, how many Arkwrights, how many men whoſe mechanick genius might have raiſed the manu-

manufactures of our country to the greateſt perfection, and given employment and ſupport to our ſtarving millions, may from the ſame cauſe have been loſt to our country. As a very elegant and feeling poet has touched on this ſubject, with much more beauty and force of language than I am maſter of, I ſhall quote his words.—

Perhaps in this neglected ſpot is laid
Some heart, once pregnant with celeſtial fire;
Hands, which the rod of empire might have ſway'd,
Or wak'd to extaſy, the living lyre.

But knowledge to their eyes its ample page,
Rich with the ſpoils of time, did ne'er unroll,
Chill Poverty repreſſed their noble rage,
And froze the genial current of their ſoul.

Full many a gem of pureſt ray ſerene,
The dark unfathomed caves of ocean bear;
Full many a flower is born to bluſh unſeen,
And waſte its ſweetneſs in the deſart air.

GRAY'S ELEGY.

Though

Though this is now the melancholy lot of the poor, it ought not to remain ſo; the fineſt and the ſweeteſt flowers of the field ſhould not be ſuffered to "bluſh unſeen and waſte their ſweetneſs in the deſart air;" the national garden is not overſtocked; thither they ſhould be tranſplanted, and carefully watered, and cultivated.

The next great advantage I would expect from educating the poor, is, that it would be a powerful means of attaching future generations of Iriſhmen to their country, and of reviving in Ireland the ſpirit of patriotiſm, which has been ſo long frozen by the miſery of the inhabitants, or broken down by that ſyſtem of corruption and iniquity which has ſo long prevailed in this country. Government would have every encouragement to undertake the education of the people, that the experience of all ages and of many countries

countries can give. " As the hand of " the potter faſhioneth his clay," ſo can Government, by the force of education and wiſe inſtitutions, form and faſhion the minds of future generations at their pleaſure. To prove this, I might refer to the hiſtory of a hundred nations; but I ſhall ſelect two, which in their time, made a great figure in the world; the Spartans and the Athenians: thoſe two nations retained for many centuries preciſely that national character which their reſpective legiſlators, Lycurgus and Solon, thought moſt proper to give them; and the proſperity of thoſe ſtates, as well as of antient Rome and modern Switzerland, was more owing to the wiſdom of their inſtitutions, than to the force of their arms. It appears to me ſo perfectly at the option of the Government, to determine the future ſtate of the country, and the character of the people, that I think it might be put to them as a

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ſimple queſtion from the ſpeaker's chair: "Is it your pleaſure, gentlemen, that the people of Ireland, ſhould be in future, an enlightened and happy nation? Let all who are of that opinion ſay aye, all who are of a contrary opinion ſay no."

Having ſaid ſo much of the abſolute neceſſity of educating the poor of Ireland, I ſhall now preſent a ſhort ſketch of a plan which would appear to me likely to anſwer what I have already ſtated, as the objects of education.

In the firſt place, I think the plan of education ſhould be national; by which I mean that it ſhould take in all the children of all the poor of Ireland, without regard to the religious diſtinctions of their parents; and the reaſons for this opinion are, 1ſt, that it would be a powerful means of uniting the people, and baniſhing thoſe religious feuds

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and animoſities which have been ſo long the curſe of this country; we ſee that even among animals, which appear by nature the moſt hoſtile to each other, if they are but bred up together, they loſe their hatred; the dog, the cat, the lion, and the tyger will all agree; and will it be ſaid, that an Iriſhman only is by nature that untameable ſavage, that what would even deprive a tyger of its ferocity, can have no effect upon him? 2dly, the plan ought to be national, becauſe the object is national, and becauſe the expence ſhould be national; nothing but the authority of the Legiſlature can create a permanent fund adequate to the expence of ſuch a plan; 3dly, it ought to be national, for if it was not ſo, in thoſe parts of the country where Proteſtants are thinly ſcattered, Proteſtant Schools could not be ſupported, and conſequently ſome of the Proteſtants would receive

no kind of Education; there would be a ſimilar inconvenience to the Catholics in ſome parts of Ulſter; the Catholics, alſo, would have this additional inconvenience; as by far the greateſt number of the poor of Ireland belongs to their perſuaſion, and as they have their own Prieſthood as well as ours to maintain, it could not be expected, that any ſubſcription which might be made among the richer Catholics, would be ſufficient for the education of their poor; from thoſe reaſons, it will appear, that ſuch a plan of Education as would take in all the children of all the poor of Ireland, is the only one proper for this country. But ſuch a plan cannot be forced upon a people, even by the ruling powers. Schools might be built at the national expence, but parents would not ſend their children to them, unleſs the plan was ſuch as met general approbation, or at leaſt

leaſt the approbation of the enlightened men of the different religious perſuaſions. Their opinion would probably ſway the multitude. In order to obtain this, among other conſiderations, nothing of religion muſt be introduced into the ſyſtem of Education, unleſs the heads of the different religions would conſent to draw up certain Articles of Faith, which they all believe, and certain moral rules drawn from ſcripture, which they all admit, and agree that this ſhould be taught in the different ſchools it might be neceſſary to eſtabliſh; otherwiſe it muſt be left entirely to the parents to form the religious character of their child. For it could not be expected a parent would ſend his child to the ſchools, if he ſuppoſed his eternal ſalvation would be endangered by it. If this was attended to, the parents would want

no inducement to have their children educated; for if ſuch a plan was adopted, as without doing violence to the religious feelings of the poor, would promiſe to educate all their children and to cultivate every genius that could be diſcovered amongſt them, and place it in its proper ſituation, what peaſant is there in the land who is a father, that could deny his child a fair chance of riſing in the world to wealth and rank above his birth; provided the nation and not himſelf was to pay the expence of his education?

Suppoſing a national plan to be formed, and ready for adoption; in order to derive the wiſhed advantages from it, the zealous cooperation of all the gentlemen and clergy of the different religions ought to be procured. If the ſubject is of the firſt importance, it would not be beneath

neath the firſt characters to attend to it; unleſs they were to attend to it, but little good could be expected from any plan; the beſt inſtitutions would degenerate into a job; the maſters would neglect their duty, and the nation muſt pay them for doing nothing: the ſchools eſtabliſhed for the public benefit, would turn out public nuiſances. But if they (ſeriouſly reflecting on the advantages the nation would gain by their attention to this ſubject, and alſo on the ſecurity it would give to the lives and properties of the riſing generation, and of their own children;) would exert themſelves to aſſiſt the execution of ſuch a plan, there is no reaſon, why the poor all over Ireland, ſhould not be, at leaſt as well educated as they are in thoſe pariſh ſchools in Dublin, which are occaſionally viſited by gentlemen. The firſt thing, which it would be neceſſary to eſtabliſh, is, a body of

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men to ſuperintend and direct the courſe of national education. I think this body ſhould be a Committee choſen from amongſt thoſe men who ſhould voluntarily ſubſcribe in aid of this meaſure; and I think care ſhould be taken, that this committee ſhould be compoſed of the propereſt men of every religious perſuaſion. It ſhould be the province of this committee to ſelect, or to compoſe ſuch books, as might be moſt fit for the different ſtages of education: they ſhould appoint the maſters for the different ſchools—and remove them if they neglected their duty. The difficulty of chooſing the maſters would not be ſo great as it might at firſt appear; in the Univerſity, a thouſand lads can be examined in four days in a long and difficult courſe of ſtudy, and a compariſon can be formed of their reſpective anſwerings; in the choice of maſters indeed there ſhould be

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a compariſon of their characters as well as their knowledge. The next point to be conſidered is, what ſchools it would be neceſſary to eſtabliſh, and to me the following appear abſolutely neceſſary, 1ſt,

*Primary or Nurſery Schools.*

Thoſe ſchools ſhould be eſtabliſhed all over the country, at the diſtance of 3 miles at the fartheſt from each other; ſo that no child ſhould be more than a mile and a half diſtant from a ſchool. Here all the children of the poor of both ſexes, ſhould learn reading, writing and the firſt rules of arithmetic; in teaching them to read, ſuch books ſhould be made uſe of, as were judged moſt likely to intereſt the minds of the young ſcholars, (by amuſing them, and giving them an early inclination for reading), and at the ſame time to convey as much information

formation as they were capable of receiving—I have already mentioned that the books to be uſed in the ſchools ſhould be ſelected by thoſe who were intruſted with the ſuperintendance of the national education; and if the propereſt books for this purpoſe are not to be found in our language, they ſhould tranſlate from other languages whatever was worthy of being tranſlated, or they ſhould themſelves compoſe books for the uſe of the ſchools: the children ſhould be encouraged to learn, by ſmall premiums, by praiſe, and honourable diſtinctions at the ſchool; for encouragement is found to be a more powerful, as well as humane method of training either man or beaſt, than violence and terror—the children ſhould be ſent to thoſe ſchools as ſoon as they could bear the fatigue of walking to and from them; (I ſuppoſe this would be, at about five

years

years of age) at the age of ten or twelve the beſt ſcholars might be candidates for admiſſion in other ſchools, which ſhall be afterwards deſcribed; if not ſucceſsful, or that their parents chooſe to keep them at home, they might continue to learn at thoſe ſchools till they were fourteen, and after that age they might remain at the diſpoſal of their parents. It appears to me, that this education would be ſufficient for the great maſs of the people, who are deſtined to live by the labour of their hands; I think it would be ſufficient to open and prepare their minds for the reception of every kind of information which might be neceſſary in their ſituation; and with ſuch information it ſhould be the care of a good Government to ſupply them.

The next advantage which I have ſtated, as likely to flow from a good plan of national education, is that every genius

nius and talent in the nation might be diſcovered, and directed to the greateſt advantage, both for its poſſeſſor and for ſociety—for this purpoſe other ſchools ſhould be eſtabliſhed; I ſhall begin with

*County Claſſical Schools.*

There ſhould be one claſſical ſchool for the poor in every county; where a limited number of boys (ſuppoſe from 20 to 50, according to the wealth and population of the county) ſhould be dieted, lodged and educated at the expence of the county; the advantage of having it ſupported at the expence of the county, would be, that the country gentlemen would by this means be induced to pay attention to it; and for the ſame reaſon, I think the neighbourhood of the county towns, or at leaſt a central ſituation in the county, ſhould be choſen for this ſchool—the expences of ſuch a ſchool would hardly be more than that of a pa-

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riſh ſchool, in Dublin, and could not be conſidered any burden on a county.

If the appointment of maſter to one of thoſe ſchools, was made ſomewhat a better proviſion than a country curacy, there might always be found among the fizers of Dublin college, a ſufficient number of men properly qualified, who would undertake the taſk: the number of boys, as I mentioned before, ought to be limited; and the vacancies ſhould be filled up by thoſe of the candidates who were the beſt anſwerers in the firſt courſe of reading already mentioned. In order to determine this in the moſt impartial manner there ſhould be a public examination, once or twice in the year, (ſuppoſe at the time of the Aſſizes) at which gentlemen of conſequence in the county ſhould make it a point to attend. The age of admiſſion into thoſe ſchools ſhould be from ten to twelve; and the

boys

boys here ſhould be for five years inſtructed in the claſſics, engliſh, writing, and arithmetic—here as in the primary ſchools, the boys ſhould be encouraged to learn by premiums &c. and it ſhould be impreſſed upon them, that their future ſituation in life depended upon the progreſs they made while they were here.

At the expiration of the five years, the beſt ſcholars ſhould ſtand Candidates for fizerſhips in Dublin college; thoſe who ſucceeded, would be in the fair road to advancement; of the reſt, ſome might go from hence to the Catholic colleges for educating Prieſts, and by this means I think the Catholic Prieſthood would be much improved, which I ſhould conſider as a national advantage: others might be put apprentices to ſuch trades, as a good education would ſerve them at; and by this means the nation would gain a great number of intelligent clerks

and

and ſhopmen, and ſome perhaps who riſing from that ſituation, might be an acceſſion to the mercantile intereſt of the community. I think, that the maſters alſo, both in thoſe ſchools and in the primary ſchools, ſhould be encouraged to do their duty by premiums; for inſtance, when a boy from any of the primary ſchools, ſhould gain admiſſion into the county claſſical ſchool; or when one from a county claſſical ſchool was admitted as a ſizer, in both theſe caſes, I think, the maſter ſhould receive a ſmall reward.

In order to follow the line of claſſical education, I ſhall proceed from thoſe ſchools to the inſtitution of Sizerſhips in Dublin college, and from thence return to other ſchools which it might be neceſſary to eſtabliſh.

## *Of Sizerſhips.*

From the inſtitution of Sizerſhips in Dublin college, (although many improvements may ſtill be ſuggeſted) great advantages have been derived to the nation: men who have been the ornaments of the bench, the ſenate, and of every liberal profeſſion, have by means of this inſtitution received that education, which otherwiſe their circumſtances would have denied, and cultivated thoſe talents, which, had it not been for this inſtitution, would have been loſt, both to ſociety and themſelves. Now, though every one muſt approve of the idea of Sizerſhips, yet it appears to me that there are theſe great defects in the preſent eſtabliſhment: 1ſt, the Sizers are not ſufficiently maintained and ſupported by the college—2dly, there is not a ſufficient encouragement to their genius and induſtry—3dly, the number is too

too ſmall. As to the firſt point; they are allowed indeed, (after having waited as menial ſervants at the table of the Fellows and Fellow Commoners), to eat up what fragments are left; ſometimes this affords them a ſufficient meal, and ſometimes it does not. But this appears to me ſo far from a liberal proviſion, for men deſtined to honorable profeſſions, that I think nothing could be contrived to offer a more wanton and unmeaning inſult to that conſcious dignity of mind, and to thoſe feelings which nature has almoſt always united with genius, and which cannot be ſeparated from it.

If a young man has ſhewn thoſe talents, which in the judgment of the college, ſhould be cultivated for the benefit of ſociety, and directed towards the liberal profeſſions; why in the name of God, muſt he (after having ſtruggled through the former part of his life, with

with all the diſadvantages and all the *contempts* which poverty experiences,) be ſtill further perſecuted in that Univerſity which has approved his talents? here he ſhould expect to find a ſacred aſylum, a peaceful harbour to protect him from the ſtorms of fortune. Would it not be the better way to encourage him, to diveſt himſelf of that aukwardneſs and vulgarity of manner and of habits, which it is probable that in his former ſtate of poverty and inferiority he muſt have contracted; and to learn that independence and dignity of mind and manners, which better accords with the liberal profeſſion for which he is deſtined; this defect would be very eaſily remedied—ſuppoſe the burſar, or the caterer of the college, in laying out the dinner, was not to calculate, that there ought to be ſuch a ſuperfluity at the table of the Fellows and Fellow Commoners, as that the fragments might

feed

feed their ſervants, the Sizers; but would juſt provide ſuch a dinner as was ſufficient for the number who were to ſit down to it; the ſaving at that table would afford a plain dinner to the Sizers at a ſeparate table; and that *cruel* and *unmeaning* inſult, of forcing enlightened men, who have better proſpects before them, to do the offices of menial ſervants, might, and ought to be done away. Independent of this, I ſay, they are not ſufficiently maintained by the College; for the two firſt years all the emoluments they get from the College would not keep a coat upon their backs; and, in order to ſupport their exiſtence, many of them are obliged to give up a great part of their time, while in College, to act as Uſhers to Schools, or in whatever other capacity they can piece out a ſcanty ſubſiſtence; perhaps, the youth of the fineſt genius in the nation, muſt quit thoſe ſtu-

dies which are congenial to him, and be employed for four or five hours in the day teaching little children to ſpell; this is enough not only to cramp and prevent his exertion, but entirely to break his ſpirit. Now, at the expenſe of 300 guineas a year, this inſtitution might be put on totally a different ſituation from what it now ſtands; and this ſum I would aſk, not merely as a charity, not merely for the cauſe of learning, but for the public advantage. For among the many advantages that the public derives from this inſtitution, we might point out one man, whoſe talents (by this means given to the public) are to the public intrinſically worth more than what the whole expenſe of the inſtitution could be ſupported for; the man I mean is our Chief Baron. The manner in which I would apply this money is, to each of the thirty Sizers I would give 5

guineas

guineas per annum, and to every Sizer on his getting a premium or certificate at the examinations I would alſo give 5 guineas; that would allow 150 guineas a year amongſt all the Sizers, and at the moſt 120 per annum amongſt the beſt anſwerers at the examinations; the remaining 30 guineas might be given in premiums to the beſt Engliſh compoſitions for Sizers only. The advantage that would be derived from this ſum, ſo applied, is evident. All the Sizers would be much more comfortably circumſtanced than they are at preſent; and thoſe of ſuperior genius and induſtry might live upon the honorable rewards of their merit, without having their attention taken from their ſtudies, or being obliged to make a livelihood by other means. I think alſo the number of 30 too few, and that they ſhould be increaſed to 50. A great number of men of learning

are always wanted for the ſchools and for curacies. But I think this inſtitution would be much more perfect, if whenever a Sizer paſſed through the College with uncommon credit (of which more than one or two inſtances could not be ſuppoſed to occur in a year) ſuch men ſhould be aſſiſted at the expenſe of the nation to whatever profeſſion the natural bent of their genius inclined; (for inſtance, thoſe who were diſpoſed for the bar might be ſpecially exempted from the uſual fees and impoſitions upon their admiſſion. They might be admitted after a certain courſe of ſtudy in Ireland, and not be obliged, at an expenſe that would to them be ruinous, to eat a certain number of dinners at a certain place in London, nor to pay a large ſum in Ireland for the purchaſe of chambers which are never to be given to the purchaſers. Every obſtacle that now preſents itſelf

ſhould

ſhould be removed out of the way of thoſe talents which the nation has taken under its protection—thoſe who choſe the church might be particularly recommended to a curacy, at leaſt—thoſe who were inclined to ſtudy phyſick, might have all the advantages which this country can afford to medical ſtudents, without expenſe, and have ſome ſmall ſum given towards their ſupport during the time of their ſtudies. Thoſe men would enter into their reſpective profeſſions with a character that would very much aſſiſt their progreſs.

Theſe are all the obſervations I have to offer on claſſical education; and I think this plan, which is extremely ſimple, would be ſufficient to draw from obſcurity every genius which was not formed for obſcurity; and to place it in ſuch a ſituation as would be moſt

to

to the advantage and credit both of its poſſeſſor and of the country. The ſteps would be but few, and a true genius could not miſs them. From the nurſery ſchools, to the county claſſical, from the county claſſical ſchools to the univerſity, from the univerſity to the profeſſion of their own chuſing—and, through that, to whatever degree of rank, wealth and honour their merits or their good fortune might raiſe them, I now return to the other ſchools which are not in the claſſical line of education, but which would be of perhaps equal utility. Theſe are, 1ſt,

## A School of Arts.

The ſituation moſt proper for this ſchool would be Dublin; both becauſe it contains the beſt maſters for every art,

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and the Dublin Society's Model-room; and alſo becauſe it contains the greateſt number of gentlemen of ſcience and taſte to viſit and attend to this ſchool. Here a limited number of boys (ſuppoſe 100) ſhould be lodged, dieted and inſtructed in whatever branch of the arts they ſhewed the greateſt taſte for. They ſhould be inſtructed here for a limited time, and the vacancies filled up by thoſe candidates who diſcovered the greateſt ingenuity and turn for the mechanic arts. This ſhould be determined by a committee of gentlemen of ſcience appointed to viſit and inſpect this ſchool; for if, in one ſingle inſtance, merit ſhould be obliged to give way to intereſt and favour, the whole ſcheme of national education would be deſtroyed, and no longer ſerve to diſcover and cultivate thoſe talents which are the moſt worthy

of

of cultivation. At the expiration of the term of education in this ſchool, the boys ſhould be put out according to the genius they have diſcovered; thoſe who ſhewed the greateſt genius might be put to the fineſt arts; thoſe who diſcovered leſs, to the common mechanic trades; and they would not make the worſe carpenters or ſmiths for having learnt the principles of mechanics. 2dly,

A School of Agriculture

Should be eſtabliſhed; and the beſt ſituation for it would be near the great Botanic garden which the Dublin Society intends to eſtabliſh; here a knowledge of botany and experimental farming might be learnt together. The idea of this ſchool I do not pretend to take credit for; as I have taken it from Dr. Dickſon's Eſſay on Education; a book which

is

is worth ſomething more than *honourable mention* at the Royal Iriſh Academy; and which I think ought to be read by every one who is anxious to know how the ſituation of the people may be improved by the means of education.

I have now gone through all the ſchools which appear to me abſolutely neceſſary; and I believe it will be allowed, that (whatever may be defective) there is nothing ſuperfluous in this plan; the maſs of the children of the poor would be taught reading, writing, and the common rules of arithmetic; and thoſe who are ſelected from the maſs, on account of ſuperior talents, would all of them be put into a better ſituation of life than their birth and the circumſtances of their parents would have placed them in; thoſe who poſſeſſed great talents would riſe to greater diſtinction; and might be the ſupport, as well

well as the pride of the old age of their parents; this conſideration muſt attach the peaſantry of Ireland very much to ſuch a ſyſtem of education; and an attachment to the inſtitutions of our country is almoſt the ſame thing as an attachment to the country.

The only part of education which now remains, is the military part; and it appears to me that unleſs a martial ſpirit ſhould be infuſed into the minds of the riſing generation, unleſs they are made a nation of ſoldiers, they muſt ceaſe to be a nation at all. With this view, I think, that at all the ſchools, bathing and every exerciſe or means which would encreaſe the ſtrength and activity of the boys ſhould be attended to; and that all the boys ſhould learn the uſe of arms, and to perform the ſimple military evolutions. If it ſhould be ſuppoſed that it would be impoſſible to govern a well-educated

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and a martial people, and that a good education muſt neceſſarily make the people Republicans and Jacobins; as an anſwer to ſuch a ſuppoſition, let the preſent ſtate of Switzerland be conſidered. The Swiſs, above all other nations, are a well-educated and martial people; their government is certainly not what is now called Democratic; and their territory immediately joins that of the French Republic. Notwithſtanding all thoſe circumſtances there is not a nation in Europe more quietly or better governed, or perhaps farther diſtant from a Revolution.

The fact is, that it is becauſe the Swiſs are a well-educated and a martial people the country is proſperous, and the government is able to act with greater dignity than any government on

earth

earth could do in the ſame circumſtances.

This ſmall ſtate, ſurrounded by all the belligerent powers, has moſt nobly preſerved its neutrality, during the various changes of the preſent war; and would never ſuffer its territory to be violated, or its councils to be dictated to by any power. Secure in the patriotiſm and military virtues of her people, Switzerland fears no attack. She hears without diſmay the blaſt of war on every ſide. She ſees the ſurrounding nations deſtroying each other; but in the very height of their fury they are all obliged to reſpect her well-educated and martial people. How weak and how contemptible does the conduct of all the other governments of Europe appear in compariſon to that of Switzerland, even of thoſe who in the language of deſperation, not of true ſpirit, declare,

"They

" They have ſet their lives upon a caſt,
" And they will ſtand the hazard of the dye.
RICHARD III.

Switzerland has no ſuch deſperate game to play. And it would be worth conſidering whether, what conſtitutes in that country the happineſs and proſperity of the people, and alſo the ſtrength and dignity of the government, would not be worth practiſing in Ireland; which is by nature infinitely ſuperior to Switzerland. This is certain, that if the Iriſh people were like the Swiſs, no nation on earth could ever think of invading our country; and the only reaſon why we are not ſo is, becauſe in Switzerland the education of the people and their intereſts have been always attended to by their government. It is not from Switzerland alone, but from the experience of all countries and times, that it may

ſafely

ſafely be ſaid, that a martial people or a great army is full as eaſily governed as an unwarlike nation or a rabble. This is the cauſe which has ſo long preſerved the wretched ſyſtem of the Ottoman government; that of all the falſe principles, errors and follies which it is poſſible for a government to adopt, the only one which it has not fallen into, is that of ſuſpecting the people, and not venturing to give them arms; the avoiding this one folly is the only ſupport of their government; had they fallen into this, their empire could not have ſtood three months againſt the force of either Ruſſia or Auſtria.

As to the idea of defending Ireland by regular, militia, and fencible regiments, I muſt own I have not the leaſt faith in it. As our armies are now conſtituted, the lower orders hate them, and ever will hate them. I will engage to prove, if the Houſe of Commons thought

thought it worth their while to eſtabliſh a committee of inquiry for the purpoſe, that part of this army on which we muſt rely for our defence, conduct themſelves more like Ruſſian Coſſacks or Tartars than like Iriſh ſoldiers in a peaceable country; and that they are more dreaded and deteſted by the peaceable inhabitants than any foreign enemy could be. But if this was not the caſe, and they behaved themſelves ever ſo well, how are our armies to be encreaſed? By crimping and kidnapping! For every one ſoldier which a recruiting officer procures by thoſe means, government gets at leaſt twenty enemies among the lower orders. When a poor wretch is torn from his bed, and from his family, handcuffed and hurried on board a tender (in defiance of the poſitive law of the land; in open and barbarous violation of perſonal liberty and ſecurity, and of every thing

which

which is dear to man, and ought to be reſpected by government) the curſes of his diſconſolate and perhaps *ſtarving* family are raiſed to heaven againſt that government under which ſuch oppreſſion and villainy are too often practiſed with impunity—and this is not all, if a foreign enemy ſhould land, who poſſeſſed humanity as well as force, what part is it to be expected that the children, the brothers, the near relations, and the friends of the *murdered* man would take? Let every one conſult his own feelings, and they will tell him.

If ſuch practices are encouraged or tolerated; if they are not puniſhed with the utmoſt ſeverity, (whatever may be the rank of the offender) I do believe, (ſo help me, God, as I ſtate my real belief) that government will, when it is too late, diſcover that their ſecu-

rity

rity is not exactly in proportion to the number of red coats which they diſtribute. They will remember how once, in a time of danger, Ireland ſmiled ſecure under the protection of her brave *Volunteer* army; they will remember, when repentance comes too late, that noble ſpirit which once exiſted in this country; which has lately been cruſhed; and which ought to be revived, if it is the will of God that Ireland ſhould ſtill continue to be reckoned amongſt the nations of the earth.

I have now finiſhed the ſketch of ſuch plan of national education as I have been able to conceive, and I ſubmit it to the public judgment as a plan not complicated, very practicable, and at the ſame time likely to accompliſh thoſe objects which have been always found to reſult from educating a people; that their individual happineſs as

well as their national character, proſperity, and ſtrength is thereby much promoted and improved. As to the other means of attaching the people, and thoſe ſervices which ought to be rendered them, I have already mentioned them in the beginning of thoſe obſervations; I ſhall only now repeat, that the induſtry of thoſe who are able to work, ought to be encouraged and aſſiſted; and that the miſeries of thoſe who from old age or ſickneſs cannot work, ought to be relieved, and their lives ſupported by a national proviſion. They ſhould not be left relying on the precarious and pitiful ſupport that can be derived from private charity.

This is no new or extravagant idea of my own. The principle (that thoſe members of ſociety who cannot labour for their own ſubſiſtence, or cannot get work, ſhould be ſupported at the

expenſe

expenſe of the nation) is adopted in England—there are indeed many defects in the Engliſh ſyſtem of poor laws. The principal defect is that which is mentioned by Blackſtone; that more attention is paid to ſupport thoſe who do not labour, than to encourage and aſſiſt thoſe who are willing to labour; the poor rates are alſo much higher than they need or than they ought to be; but theſe, and all other defects that there are, in a moſt excellent inſtitution, might be eaſily diſcovered and removed, if men of talents and humanity as well as influence would turn their attention to the ſubject. However, the poor of England feel in thoſe laws, the *protecting hand* of the government of their country. Where are the poor of this country to turn for *protection?* They muſt truſt in that God " whoſe ears are ever open to the cries of the miſerable, and thoſe who

have no helper," that the time will come when men may be found, who will not be aſhamed to riſe in the Senate, and plead the *unfaſhionable* and *odious* cauſe of *the poor of the people of Ireland.*

The only thing that now remains is, to calculate the expenſe of ſuch a plan; and alſo to point out means for defraying it. The expenſe of educating the people of Ireland would be about 100,000l. a year. But to what ſhould be ſpent in encouraging and aſſiſting induſtry, and relieving want, no limit can be fixed; but as much as the revenues of the country could poſſibly afford ſhould be applied to thoſe purpoſes. I think, at preſent, five or ſix hundred thouſand pounds annually might be applied to thoſe purpoſe; in time to come, conſiderably more; without laying on a ſingle tax, which would

be

be at all injurious to the country; but on the contrary, by means which would much promote its advantage.

The way I calculate the expenſe of educating the people on the plan propoſed is this; ſuppoſe the ſchool of arts ſhould coſt 2000l. a year; the ſchool of agriculture 1500l. the improvement of the inſtitution of Sizerſhips 300 guineas a year—the only expenſe that remains is the intereſt of the money at firſt laid out in eſtabliſhing thoſe ſchools, which could not be more than 4000l. a year; and the annual expenſe of the primary or nurſery ſchools. As to the number of thoſe ſchools, if we ſuppoſe Ireland to contain (as the Geographers aſſert) 18,000 ſquare miles of land, excluſive of the loughs and harbours, the number would be exactly 2000 (the ſchools being at the diſtance of three miles from each other)

other) if the figure of Ireland had been regular, and that calculation exact. At 45l. yearly for each, this would amount to 90,000l. and bring the whole expenſe of educating the people under 100,000l. per annum. That 45l. per annum would be a ſufficient allowance for each nurſery ſchool, will be admitted by any one who conſiders what a number of people (who could teach children to read and write, and with the help of an arithmetick book to cypher,) could be found, who would think a cabin rent free, and a ſalary of 35l. per annum was a good eſtabliſhment; and worth qualifying themſelves for.

The means by which I would provide for the expenſe of educating the people are, 1ſt, by

A Tax on Absentees.

A tax of 4s. in the pound (which is no more than the land tax of England) laid

laid on the eſtates of abſentees, would of itſelf nearly, if not altogether, produce as much as would pay the expenſe of educating the whole people.

It is highly unjuſt and unreaſonable that their properties ſhould not be taxed; it is unjuſt that thoſe who live in the country, and are of ſervice to it, ſhould be obliged at their expenſe to pay for the protection of the property of thoſe who do not chooſe to live in it, but do as much injury to it as they poſſibly can. I believe no argument can be adduced to ſhew why the abſentees ſhould form a *privileged claſs* of Iriſhmen; themſelves exempt from taxation; and yet their properties as well protected as if they paid their ſhare; (at the ſeparate and ſole expenſe of thoſe who reſide in the country and are of uſe to it.)

In

In addition to the produce of this tax, the money now given to dioceſan ſchools might for the future be added to this fund—and there might be alſo a private ſubſcription in aid of the meaſure, which would be attended with this additional advantage, that it would intereſt the ſubſcribers in obſerving how their money was laid out.

The expenſe of educating all the people of Ireland would be amply provided for by thoſe means. It now remains to conſider what other ſums might be applied in improving the ſituation of the poor, and attaching them to their country, by giving them an intereſt in it. The firſt grand reſource which I ſhall mention is,

*The ſaving that would accrue to the nation, if, inſtead of the expenſive ſyſtem of corruption, honeſty and the public good*

*was*

*was made the principle of government.*

Not to ſpeak of the wickedneſs of the ſyſtem of corruption, I calculate the expenſe of it at 300,000l. annually laid out in corrupting the morals of the nation and its repreſentatives; and in breaking down that ſpirit of patriotiſm which is ſo natural to man, and which would be the ſureſt defence of the country in the hour of danger. I do not wiſh to exaggerate the misfortunes of my country; I had rather that my ſtatement was conſiderably under, than any thing over, the truth. I have calculated on the beſt grounds I could meet; and if I am wrong, let the *Miniſters of Corruption* ſhew me, or rather the nation, what I have miſtated; until they do, I can only calculate upon probable grounds; but ſuch as I ſubmit to the public are fair grounds. It

appears

appears to me that what may be called the *ordinary* expenſes of corruption are at leaſt 200,000l. annually; and the *extraordinary* may be reckoned at 100,000l. more. Under the head of the ordinary expenſes of corruption I claſs the exorbitant ſalaries which are annexed to places, (the buſineſs of which is done by deputy for a mere trifle) in order *to oblige peers, members of the Houſe of Commons, and their friends;* I alſo rank thoſe penſions which are beſtowed without merit; and the value of thoſe places which are *ſold for the private advantage of thoſe in power.* What I call extraordinary, is what is expended at elections, and in *bribery* of all ſorts. As to the ordinary expenſes, the calculation will not be conſidered too high, if the value of the parliamentary places is firſt conſidered; next, that of thoſe places which, though not conſidered parliamentary,

mentary, are only to be got by parliamentary connections; and thirdly, of thoſe places of truſt and emolument which are notoriouſly *ſold* (not for the advantage of the nation, but for the private advantage of thoſe in power.) When all theſe things are conſidered, who can doubt but that the nation is plundered, and its reſources and proſperity drained off to ſupply the peſtilential ſink of corruption? O! but this is a falſe ſtatement, ſome will ſay; although, to be ſure, there is a little patronage and jobbing, and all that, going forward; things are not ſo bad as here repreſented; they are tranſacted with ſome kind of *delicacy* and *honour*; and to prove this they may produce every newſpaper in which "From two hundred to two thouſand pounds are offered to any *lady* or *gentleman* who has *influence* to procure for the advertiſer a civil employment

ployment of *adequate* value;" and we may always ſee in the *Poſtſcript*, that the ſtricteſt *delicacy*, *honour* and *ſecreſy*, are to be obſerved in the tranſaction.

Now, although I muſt admit that the word *Honour* is always to be found in theſe poſtſcripts, and alſo that I have heard of ſuch a thing as "Honour among Thieves;" yet it does appear to me, that thoſe advertiſements (now grown as common as advertiſements for Bank Loan, or Canal Stock, or any other marketable commodity) muſt prove to the ſatisfaction, or rather to the diſſatisfaction of every reaſonable man, that ſuch practices as I have ſtated do exiſt.

There is another ground on which I think I may fairly calculate the ordinary expenſes of corruption.

Perhaps

Perhaps it is not known to ſome of our preſent miniſters, *innocent* and *ſpotleſs* men, who are themſelves ſo far above the reach of corruption, that ſome of them do not even appear to underſtand the word when it is mentioned in the Houſe of Commons, but ſeem as much puzzled at it as the Houynhyms were at a *lye*, to know what could be the meaning or the uſe of it? Perhaps to thoſe virtuous men it is not known, that in former parliaments ſeats have been actually bought and ſold; and that from two or three thouſand pounds each was reckoned the *market price*. Now the nation is grown of late ſo exceedingly *wicked*, that if we could ſuppoſe ſuch a horrid thing as that there ſhould be a diſſolution of parliament to-morrow, and that the ſeats in the next parliament ſhould be offered for ſale to the higheſt bidders,

bidders, there can be no doubt at all but they would bring near 3000l. each; that is, 300 ſeats for one parliament would bring the enormous price of 900,000. Now the maſs of the people are ſo *uncharitable*, that they cannot be brought to believe that thoſe civil employments which have *nominally* no profit annexed to them would be purchaſed at that immenſe price, unleſs there were to be places, penſions, patronage, contracts, jobs and other political bonus's created at the expenſe of the nation, ſufficient to reimburſe the *ſpeculators*. If the maſs of the people are right in forming ſuch judgment, I am ſure that leſs than the value of 200,000l. a year would not give the purchaſers of ſeats a common *Smithfield bargain* for the money they laid out. This too, takes in but *part* of the ſyſtem, and allows nothing for *conſcience*, *character* or *attendance*.

I now

I now come to the extraordinary expenſes of corruption; under which head I have claſſed thoſe ſums which it muſt be ſuppoſed are ſpent *at elections*, ſecret ſervices, and in bare-faced *bribery*. The exact amount of thoſe ſums it is impoſſible for me to calculate; but I do ſuppoſe that the gueſs I have made is conſiderably under the real truth. In order to prove the gigantic ſcale on which bribery has been conducted when miniſters were in great danger of loſing their places, I ſhall recall to the reader's recollection what paſſed at the time of the diſputed queſtion of the regency. Does any one forget, that at that time our Houſe of Commons was plainly told by *a miniſter* (though not in thoſe very words) that government had before, in ſimilar circumſtances, expended *half a million* to corrupt *one party*, and that they might be then obliged to ſpend

half

half a million more to corrupt *another party*. This declaration, made by a miniſter in the Houſe of Commons, muſt be admitted as poſitive proof, as far as it goes: If ſo much was confeſt, the amount of what has not yet been confeſt muſt be very conſiderable.

It has alſo been confidently ſaid, and generally believed, that a table has been kept at the national expenſe for a certain deſcription of men called *caſtle-hacks*, whoſe names it was judged prudent not to bring forward on the penſion liſt: and that after dinner each man has received his daily *bribe* as the reward of his daily *proſtitution*.

Theſe kinds of tranſactions being all ſecret, it is impoſſible for me to ſtate the amount of the ſum ſo miſapplied. But I conceive I have ſhewn fair probable

able grounds to ſuppoſe, that the ſtanding expenſe of the ſyſtem of corruption cannot be leſs than 300,000l. per ann. And this ſum, vaſt as it is, can only be conſidered as the *appropriated* expenſes of the ſyſtem, for conſiderably more has been loſt to the nation by *waſte* and by *connivance*; for even the ſyſtem of *corruption* has been managed with needleſs *prodigality*. For inſtance, if it ſhould be judged neceſſary to corrupt every city and corporate town in Ireland, and as a means of accompliſhing this purpoſe miniſters choſe to eſtabliſh every where a *board of police*, would it not be ſufficient to allow large ſalaries to the commiſſioners, without ſuffering them to plunder the nation in every poſſible ſhape afterwards? The ſame queſtion, I believe, may be aſked as to every department of the ſtate; for it muſt be ſuppoſed that the ſame cauſes produce

the ſame effects throughout. It is the infernal wickedneſs of the ſyſtem itſelf which obliges great men to *wink* at each others private *peculations* and *plunder*, until at length *impunity* begets *effrontery*, and this produces a *horrid emulation* amongſt thoſe in power and truſt, *Who ſhall defraud the country moſt?*—But the advocates of corruption will ſay, that it is now grown a part of *our conſtitution*, which would be endangered if corruption was removed. I deny that *corruption* is any part of our *conſtitution*. As the ivy entwines itſelf about the oak, at the ſame time exhauſting its vital ſap, and concealing its venerable form, ſo has corruption entwined itſelf about our conſtitution, and ſo concealed it from our view, that when we look for *our conſtitution* we ſee nothing but *corruption*.

Whoever

Whoever ſincerely wiſhes that our conſtitution ſhould flouriſh, muſt alſo wiſh that the ſyſtem of corruption ſhould fall. It is "a bad tree and never can bring forth good fruit;" in the name of God, then, "let it be hewn down, and caſt into the fire."

As a further means for raiſing money for this object, I think 150,000l. a year might be raiſed by a moderate ceſs in the nature of

Poor Rates.

In England thoſe rates are exceſſively high; but I think a moderate ceſs for this purpoſe could not be complained of by any one (if the money ſo levied was fairly and judiciouſly laid out for the purpoſe it was demanded); the tax I have mentioned would be mode-

rate, and would be hardly, if at all, felt; for if the public fund ſufficiently provided for the poor, the neceſſity of private charities would be in a great meaſure taken away; and every man of property might ſave at leaſt as much in that reſpect as would pay his proportion of the ceſs.

This ſum, added to the probable ſaving from giving up the ſyſtem of corruption, would amount to about half a million annually; which might be applied in improving the condition of the poor, and attaching them to their country. If a government was ſeriouſly to undertake that taſk, and begin with that fund, the effects it would produce would be of the utmoſt importance; they would find that in the ſame proportion as the poverty of the people was diminiſhed, the proſperity

of

of the country, and conſequently its revenues, and ſtill farther means of providing for the happineſs of the people, would be encreaſed. If they were conſtantly to purſue that object, there can be little doubt but that Ireland would in the courſe of ten or twenty years be as happy a country as any in the world; perfectly capable of defending herſelf from any enemy; and perhaps able to ſupport and ſave the *falling* empire of Great Britain. I think I could alſo point out other taxes to the amount of 200,000l. annually for this purpoſe; which, inſtead of being a burthen to the nation, would be a poſitive advantage; but as long as the revenues of the nation are applied to the ſupport of war and corruption, whoever ſhould point out a new tax, might perhaps be contributing to the *miſeries* and to the *murder* of his fellow creatures and countrymen.

I have

I have now finiſhed the taſk I propoſed to perform; I have endeavoured to ſhew the neceſſity of attaching the lower orders to the country and to its government, from the danger that is confeſt to proceed from their want of attachment. I have alſo pointed out ſuch means as occurred to me for cultivating and procuring that attachment, and given a ſketch of a plan of national education (which, although almoſt *any plan* is better than *no plan*, I do not, however, recommend as a perfect one.) My wiſh is principally to turn the attention of the public to thoſe ſubjects which every one will allow are of the utmoſt importance, and which have hitherto been moſt ſhamefully neglected in this country. So far am I from the vanity of expecting, or even wiſhing that my ideas (particularly on education) ſhould be altogether adopted, that

I do

I do not think there is an individual in the nation, whoſe abilities (however great) can entitle him to preſcribe to the Iriſh nation on a ſubject of ſuch importance, as how the riſing generation, and generations yet unborn, are to be educated and inſtructed. I think a plan of ſuch magnitude could only be made perfect by the united labour of all the talents in the nation, and I think the ſubject is of ſuch importance as to call for ſuch a union of talents and exertion. I do therefore, with great deference, *propoſe* it to ſuch of the nobility, gentry, and enlightened citizens of Ireland, as feel the neceſſity of educating and inſtructing the people and improving their ſituation, and who wiſh to contribute their exertions to the accompliſhment of thoſe great national objects, to aſſociate without delay for that purpoſe.—The principal aſſociation ſhould be in Dublin

lin—and I think there ſhould be alſo aſſociations in every city and town of Ireland which contains men of information, patriotiſm and philanthropy.—Theſe aſſociations would naturally attract every well-informed man in the community who felt an intereſt in the ſucceſs of the meaſure, and conſequently every man who would be capable of aſſiſting to form a good plan for the purpoſe.

At the meetings of thoſe aſſociations every member might read what he had to offer upon the ſubject; and different men might take up different parts of the great plan. The proceedings of theſe ſocieties ſhould be regularly printed for the uſe of the members, ſo that every plan or idea which was offered might be fully and deliberately diſcuſſed at ſubſequent meetings. If ſuch aſſociations

ſhould

ſhould be ſpeedily formed, I have no doubt but in the courſe of a year a plan of national education and inſtruction, and alſo for the improvement of the condition of the poor, could be formed, as perfect as the united talents of the nation could make it, and of ſuch a nature as would meet the approbation of all claſſes and religions of the people of Ireland. If that could be accompliſhed, ſuch a plan might be preſented to parliament in the next ſeſſion, ſupported by petitions from all quarters; and could hardly fail of ſucceſs. As this appears to me the beſt means of obtaining thoſe objects which every friend to Ireland muſt deſire, I have conceived it a duty to deliver my ſentiments to the public. As for myſelf, if there is one ſingle idea in this book that ſhall be conſidered worth adopting, or if it ſhall at all ſerve to direct the public attention to the ſub-

ject, by calling on men better qualified than myſelf, to write on it, I ſhall be perfectly ſatisfied for the trouble I have taken; if I ſhould not be ſo fortunate, I ſhall at leaſt be comforted with the conſciouſneſs of having, though ineffectually, endeavoured to ſerve my country.

FINIS.

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